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ABSTRACT

The increasing commercialism and professionalism of sport through the medium of television has had an impact upon the policy of the Canadian government toward sport. Facing pressure from separatist movements within the country, the government has made athletics a keystone in the drive for national unity. The cultural significance of sport and the need to place priority on the pursuit of international excellence has been emphasized. While amateur participation continues to be encouraged, programs receiving government support focus primarily on competitive elite sport, particularly hockey. Grants-in-aid are given to promising young athletes with Olympic potential to the detriment of programs directed toward fitness and recreation for the average athlete. The prevalent form of professional and elite amateur sport poses a threat to mass participatory sport programs and may possibly permeate youth sport programs to the extent that intrinsic outcomes of participation will no longer hold any attraction or value. For the young person who cannot perform at a level where the extrinsic rewards are forthcoming, the alternative may be dropping out of competitive sport programs. (JD)

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GOVERNMENT AND SPORT TRANSFORMATION IN CANADA

Presented at the Annual Conference
of the North American Society
for the Sociology of Sport

by

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Introduction

In the 1968-1970 period federal government sport policy in Canada underwent dramatic changes. In the period since 1961, when the first significant involvement of the government in sport began, the programs had been concerned with the physical fitness of Canadians and improving the quality of coaching and increasing the level of participation in sport at all levels. The changes between 1968 and 1970 redirected the program towards an emphasis on the development of elite athletes, and towards success in international competition. Although the federal government continued to espouse the value of community based sports and physical activity programs, its actions made it clear that these endeavours were of secondary concern. This change was a response of the Canadian Government to the political problems and concerns of the times. It was possible and desirable because sport itself was being transformed from a low-significance, community-based activity to a highly-structured, rationalized instrument for the achievement of such purposes as national aggrandizement and the selling of consumer goods.

This paper will trace and examine these changes in Canada. It is part of a larger study of government policy-making in sport in Canada which examines the forces and events which led to the shift of federal government policies toward sport from the low-level, passive and indirect involvement of the early 1960's to the direct, forceful role

in the development of elite athletes in the 1970's[1] (Macintosh and Franks, 1982). The impact of these changes is still being felt. In 1979, the White Paper on Sport clearly reaffirmed the federal government's commitment to the development of elite athletes and conceded that mass sport and physical activity programs were mainly a provincial concern. Some of these consequences and their implications will be considered in a concluding section, after the history of the changes themselves have been described.

Sports Policy Up To 1968

Formal federal government involvement in the development and promotion of sport began with Bill C-131, An Act to Encourage Fitness and Amateur Sport, passed in parliament in 1961. Bill C-131 committed the federal government "to encourage, promote, and develop fitness and amateur sport in Canada" (Bill C-131, Chapter 59, Section 3, 1961). According to speeches by then Prime Minister Diefenbaker, and the Minister of National Health and Welfare, Waldo Monteith, the act was intended to encourage mass participation as well as improve international sport performances. Sports leaders and physical educators hoped for improvements in physical fitness levels of

[1] This research project is being funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The authors of this paper wish to acknowledge the contributions of associate investigators Tom Bedecki and Rick Gruneau and research assistants Donna Greenhorn, Bob Hollands, and Aniko Varpalotai.

Canadians and an increase in the number of sports participants. The media, supported by a substantial portion of the public, however, looked for increased success of Canadian amateur athletes.

In the first few years following the enactment of Bill C-131, federal government involvement in the program was indirect and consisted mainly of distributing funds to sports governing bodies and to the provinces in the form of federal-provincial cost-sharing agreements. The government assumed a passive role and reacted to suggestions which were forthcoming from the National Advisory Council, a body which had been established in the Act to advise the Minister of National Health and Welfare on the implementation of the program.

The shortcomings and inadequacies of the policies and programs in the 1961-68 era were important factors in determining future federal government sport directions. The federal government found it could not develop mass sports and physical fitness programs. The federal-provincial cost-sharing agreements did little to foster such programs, and the dilution across the entire country of the minimal levels of monies set aside for these programs meant that mass sports and fitness funding represented only a drop in a very large bucket. Although some progress was made in the development of elite athletes, the era was more noted for laying bare the substantial barriers to further improvement. The sports governing bodies, for the most part, did not have the organizational skills or the leadership necessary for this task. It was evident that funds would have to be expended to hire professional full-time staff and to streamline administrative and

organizational capacities. It also became clear that elite Canadian athletes would need to spend a much greater percentage of their time in training and competing in top level events, if dramatic improvements in international performances were to be attained. In order to accomplish these ends, many felt the only route was financial support for elite athletes. It became obvious that the federal government would have to adopt a much more aggressive stance if Canada were to regain its former prominence in world hockey. Two options for rectifying these shortcomings were open to the federal government. Either it could increase greatly its financial support to sports governing bodies, depending upon them to upgrade coaching and stimulate high performance sport, or it could opt for the development of its own agencies and bodies and deal more directly with athletes and coaches.

In the post 1968 years, the federal government reconfirmed its interest in sports, and chose the second of these paths. The forces and events that led it to do so included the growing problems of national unity, and experience with the first Canada Games in 1967, that had suggested to the federal government that sport could help it attain its political goals of national identity and unity.

The Political Context of Change in Sports Policy

The national unity issue in Canada in the late 1960's can be traced back to post World War II political developments. The size and

scope of federal government activity in Canada in the 1940's and 1950's increased greatly. In the early post World War II years, the federal government had a prominence and power it had not had before nor since. The war had entrenched the beginnings of a national economy; the federal government had managed and directed the economy and this development. The plans for peacetime included federally funded and directed welfare programs and Keynesian fiscal and monetary policies to avoid recessions of the type which occurred after World War I, and to encourage economic growth and full employment.

But the halcyon days of a powerful central federal government began to wane in the late 1950's and early 1960's. The economic prosperity and growth which had been experienced in the western industrialized nations after World War II came to an end in the late 1950's. The impact of the ensuing increase in unemployment in Canada was magnified by regional disparities and placed a severe strain on Canadian federalism. The inability of the Diefenbaker government to develop coherent policies to solve the economic issues and its ineptitude in many aspects of public policy, including federal-provincial relations, contributed substantially to the declining influence of the federal government (Smiley, 1967:50). At the same time, provincial governments were growing in power and competence because they had primary responsibilities in fields in which government was expanding including education, health, and welfare.

The portion of total public expenditures made by the provincial and local governments began to expand. The provinces recruited greater numbers of public servants; these new and competent administrators were less inclined to acquiesce to federal government dominance in matters of major importance. These factors all contributed to a growing tension between the federal and provincial governments and gave rise to a demand for a more formalized approach to federal-provincial negotiations.

This demand led to a breakdown of the horizontal relations which had existed during the post-war period between ministers or officials with similar interests at both levels of government (Simeon, 1972:37). It was replaced by a form of "executive federalism," whereby negotiations were carried out between both elected and appointed officials from the two levels of government. The advent of executive federalism and the attenuation of federal dominance meant that the machinery for inter-governmental collaboration was increasingly institutionalized at senior political levels. Federal-provincial relations became much more important to all levels of government, and consequently, a vast and complex network of federal-provincial organizations was established to deal with more specific matters (Smiley, 1972:56-60).

The most influential factor on federal-provincial relations was the Quiet Revolution in Quebec during the first half of the 1960's. It was based in French-Canadian nationalism and hostility to Ottawa

and English Canada. Smiley maintains that the "rise of nationalist interventionism in Quebec after the death of Duplessis has contributed more to changes in Canadian federalism than any other single factor" (Smiley, 1967:54).

The new Lesage Liberal government, elected in 1960, sparked the "Quiet Revolution." Quebec moved from a traditional to a modern society. These sweeping changes created heavy demands on the federal government for greater provincial autonomy and for a more formalized procedure for intergovernmental collaboration. These demands, for the most part, were met during the Pearson administration in the mid 1960's through extensive decentralization to the provinces (Smiley, 1972:149-150).

The upheaval in federal-provincial relations and the impact of the Quiet Revolution caused severe strain on the nature and structure of federalism in Canada in the 1960's. Concern grew that many important but piecemeal changes in federal-provincial relations had been made without adequate consideration of their cumulative effect of the federal system (Smiley, 1972:42). By the time the Lesage government left office in 1966, Quebec had attained considerable elements of special status in the Canadian federal system. Initial sympathy and support which had been expressed for Quebec gave way to scepticism as the possiblility of separation was raised. Anglophone opposition to separatism was expressed through the Canadian Committee and other similar groups (Resnick, 1977:119-120). The Quebec general election of 1966 brought to power the Union Nationale. The Union Nationale

was committed to reform of the constitution on bi-national lines and shifted the focus of this conflict between Quebec and Ottawa from specific demands for provincial autonomy to broader and more symbolic matters of constitutional reform and the role of the province in international affairs. This mutual isolation of Ottawa and Quebec was considered to pose further challenges to national unity.

The Anglophone nationalism which was sparked by the growing threat of separatism was fanned by another perceived threat to national unity, the domination of the Canadian economy and culture by the United States. Economic growth in Canada in the 1950's had accelerated, facilitated by American direct investment in the Canadian economy (Cook, 1971:47). By the middle 1950's, American control of Canadian industry approached the 50 percent level, and doubts were expressed as to whether Canadians still held the reins of their own economy (Bliss, 1966:370). Although most Canadians accepted the reality of some measure of this continentalism, there were different interpretations of just what degree of American investment control or ownership was desirable; concern was more strongly articulated in specific areas such as culture (Resnick, 1977:43). The 1957 Walter Gordon Report on economic prospects clearly described the dominance of the Canadian economy, industry, and commerce by the United States and made suggestions for increased Canadian influence in the use and development of her resources. These warnings were largely ignored, and by the mid 1960's, there had been no significant reduction in the growth of American control (Bliss, 1966:370). George Grant

articulated the concerns of many Canadians in 1965, in Lament for a Nation. Canada had developed into a northern extension of the continental economy. Grant described the Canadian role as that of "a branch-plant of the American capitalism" and he maintained that the ruling class looked across the border for its final authority in both politics and culture (Grant, 1965:8-9).

The national crisis debates of the mid 1960's caused the federal government to adopt a firmer stance on federal-provincial relations (Simeon, 1972:209-210). But it was not until the landslide Liberal victory in 1968, which Prime Minister Trudeau won on a strongly federalist platform, and which resulted in French-Canadian representation at the highest policy-making levels (Simeon, 1972:211), that this resolve could be translated into action. Trudeau's views of federalism were based upon a belief in a united Canada. Special status for Quebec was unacceptable, but federal authorities must respect provincial jurisdictions. Most important, Trudeau saw liberal and nationalist values to be diametrically opposed; strong nationalistic views were not compatible with Canadian federalism.

In taking a much more aggressive strategy in re-asserting federal identity, Trudeau accepted a personal mandate to undertake a major restructuring of the central decision-making in government (French, 1980:20). This restructuring was to include a formalization of the system of standing committees of cabinent, an encouragement of consultation or collegiality among ministers, a reassertion of the political responsibility of ministers relative to the bureaucracy, and

an emphasis upon rational decision-making and planning in policy formulation. Central to the organizational structure of Trudeau's cabinent committees was the Priorities and Planning Committee. It was to set the direction of government policy by choosing priorities, initiating major policy reviews, assigning certain responsibilities to other cabinet committees, and considering the most pressing and politically important issues. Trudeau's reforms stemmed partly from his determination to avoid the government-by-crisis pattern which had characterized the Diefenbaker and Pearson administrations. They also reflected pressures for increased planning which were being exerted on all western governments by the arrival of the pervasive state, and by an explosion of activity in the social sciences. Trudeau was intellectually and culturally sympathetic to the rationalism of the planning movement, and its formality helped him compensate for the lack of an extensive network of personal acquaintances and breadth of experience on which Lester Pearson had relied (French, 1980:20-21).

In 1968, Canadians were looking for ways out of the crisis of unity and identity, and these issues were an important part of Trudeau's campaign speeches. In Selkirk B.C., Trudeau made the promise that if he were elected he would establish a Task Force to investigate sport. The promise was delivered in the context of remarks about the contribution of culture to national unity. It was at a time when Canadians were concerned about their declining fortunes in hockey and other international sports. Trudeau apparently viewed sport as a part of Canadian culture and connected it with the theme of national unity which was so prominent in 1968.

Sport had a peculiar attractiveness in the 1960's as an instrument for achieving a symbolic goal like national unity. It did not cost government a great deal; it had mass audiences and citizen appeal, and support; there was no serious opposition to it; and athletic achievement was independent of language, culture, or regional origin. Canada had not been successful in international sports. Particularly galling was the country's international hockey demise and declining performances in other prestigious sports competitions. The development of elite athletes and success in international competition were an obvious and easy road to success. Sport also appealed, though this was seldom mentioned, to intensely nationalistic and jingoistic emotions.

Like every other important issue in Canadian politics, sport had to be looked at in the context of federal-provincial relations. A focus on elite athletes was attractive on this score to the federal government: it left room for a provincial role in mass recreation and sports participation. This would assuage the provincial hunger for a share of this attractive field, as the federal government could assert its preeminence in the areas which could generate support for national unity and identity. The logic of these arguments for re-thinking and re-directing federal government sport policies found their justification and force in the changes which, at the time, were transforming sport itself.

Sport Transformation

The political issues in Canada in the 1960's which together constituted the national unity crisis and which helped shape the direction of federal government sports policy in the 1970's cannot,in themselves, account for the change in direction in this sport policy. Sport itself had undergone changes in order for Prime Minister Trudeau to mention it in the context of culture and national unity and to state that the federal government had to do more for sport.

Central to this transformation was the powerful and unique affinity between television and sport. It has been aptly described as follows:

> On a continuing basis, with the added advantage of its escapist values, there was nothing better suited to television than sport. Football, because it was an action game, an acting out of war, with form - violent, competitive, full of strategy, marked with surprise, was the consummate television show.
> (Brown, 1971:303)

Improved television technology enhanced this relationship even more. 'Slow motion' and 'instant replay' were ideally suited to sport broadcasting; by 1964, the instant replay had become standard fare, particularly in football. One camera showed an overview of the live action while other cameras focussed on individual key players in close-up. All were linked to videotape machines with the result that within seconds, key aspects of the developed play could be shown in close-up and in slow motion. Barnouw describes this process as resulting in "incredible transformations: brutal collisions become ballets and end runs and forward passes become miracles of human coordination" (Barnouw, 1975:347).

Rapid industrialization and urbanization combined with technological advances to provide most Canadians in the 1950's with increased disposable income and leisure time. The inauguration of TV in Canada in the early 1950's coincided with this increased prosperity and leisure time. By 1962, 89 percent of Canadian households had television sets. The number of television stations in Canada had grown to 61 in 1963 from a total of two in 1953 (Shea, 1980:31, 110). In addition, the vast majority of Canadians lived close enough to the United States border to have access to American channels. In 1972, it was estimated that Canadians spent an average of four hours a day watching television, and that up to two-thirds of this time was devoted to United States programs (Green, 1972:43).

Because sport made up a significant part of television programming, it was brought into the living rooms of millions of Canadians, many of whom had very little previous exposure or knowledge of competitive sport. By 1961-62, a comprehensive 52-week package of television sports programs was carried over both English and French networks in the series "World of Sports" which covered Canadian international sporting events. Representative sports programming had increased from six to sixteen features, with some of the new additions being Wimbledon Tennis, Pro-Am Golf, and Inter-Collegiate Football (CBC, 1961-62:34, 41). In the 52 weeks from October 15, 1961 to October 15, 1962, the total number of hours of sports broadcasts carried on the English and French radio and television networks of the CBC was approximately 814 hours. Of this total, 333 hours were

devoted to American sports and 481 hours to Canadian sports events. The appeal of hockey to Canadian audiences was reflected in the fact that CBC devoted 252 of these hours to hockey coverage (HC Debates, 21, January, 1963:2919). The 1964 Olympics in Japan were given exclusive daily coverage by CBC. In addition to satellite pictures, videotapes of the athletic events were flown via jet airliners for telecast the day following each event. By 1964, the estimated percentage of the programming devoted to sports, was 12 percent for the English networks and 6 percent for the French networks (CBC, 1964-65:36,38). The advent of colour TV in 1966-67 enhanced even further the sports broadcasts, most notably hockey and outdoor events. New sports programming included the Canadian Winter Games Ceremonies, Scotch Cup Curling, and the Clay-Folley Fight.

Given the strong attraction that hockey held for Canadians, it is not surprising that the National Hockey League was the dominant sport which was aired in Canada in the 1960's. In the mid 1960's, the Nielsen TV ratings consistently showed that the Saturday night hockey telecasts were the most popular programs in Canada (H.C. Debates, 28 June, 1965:2915). The CBC 1969-70 Annual Report cited the coverage of NHL hockey games as the most popular Canadian television show (CBC Annual Report, 1969-70, Cited by Stewart, 1972:54). In 1969, 6.2 million Canadians watched the Stanley Cup finals between Boston and Montreal (CBC Annual Report, 1970-71). Kidd and Macfarlane, writing about the centrality of hockey in the lives of Canadians, claimed that more Canadians watched hockey than engaged in any other single public

activity. "Hockey Night in Canada really was hockey night in Canada. We scheduled our lives around it." During elections Canadian political parties told their canvassers not to knock on doors during hockey games so as not to lose votes. At playoff time, Canadian churches held their services early to accommodate game times, and students evacuated university libraries, "even scholarly discipline having its limits" (Kidd and Macfarlane, 1972:8). Sports pages confirm this centrality of hockey. A survey of the Edmonton Journal in the early 1970's revealed that 46 percent of the sports pages were devoted to hockey (Kidd and Macfarlane, 1972:157).

With the financial incentives provided by lucrative television contracts, sport became increasingly professionalized. Encouragement and enticements to young athletes to pursue sport as a career became much more prevalent, and sport became more an occupational category of work and less a leisure time activity and pastime (Heinila, 1973:353). Athletes became increasingly committed to organizations and to contractual relationships which were comparable to those in industry and commerce. Financial incentives, controls, and limits on the athletes' actions and behaviour were features of these contractual relationships. Intensified training regimens and the increasing complexity of modern sport meant that practices and games came more to resemble work and less to resemble play (Heinila, 1973:353-354). This transformation applied not only to professional sport, but increasingly became part of what was known as amateur sport.

The strong ties between sport and television and the increasing professionalization of sport led also to the commodification of sport. Not only did sport become associated with commercial products, it became a commodity to be produced for easy consumption. The sports 'package' was shaped to be attractive to viewers to ensure its continued success and commercial backing. All forms of sport on television, whether professional or amateur, were motivated to adopt the logic of 'professional presentation' and were viewed as legitimate entertainment rather than game forms.

The extent to which the modern Olympic Games became infused with commercial interests, or commodified, probably best exemplifies the impact of changes in sport in the 1960's and 70's on government attitudes towards sport policies. As if to match step with professional sport, Olympic competitions became vast economic enterprises (Miller & Russell, 1971:155). A sizable proportion of the funds which were poured into the Games came from the sale of television rights. Without the television dollars, the lavish Olympic spectaculars of recent years would have been only threadbare facsimiles (Johnson, 1973:460).

The rapid escalation of broadcast revenues for televising the Olympic Games in the 1960's can be seen in the following statistics. In 1956, television corporations had refused to broadcast the Olympic Games, arguing that the rights should be free because the Games, as a news event, were a matter of public interest (Espy, 1979:73). But for the 1960 Rome Olympics, the total television rights were sold for

approximately $1.2 million. CBS bought the United States rights for $550,000 (Snyder & Spreitzer, 1978:151). In addition, 46 firms donated goods or made services available (Espy, 1979:73). In 1968, ABC paid $2 million for the competition at Grenoble (Johnson, 1973:460). The television rights for the 1972 Munich Olympics cost ABC $13.5 million, and NBC $6.4 million (Snyder & Spreitzer, 1978:151). In 1976, the rights to the Summer Games at Montreal went to ABC for $25 million. NBC paid $85 million for the rights to the 1980 Moscow Olympics (Snyder & Spreitzer, 1978:151).

As the price of broadcasting rights to televise the Olympic Games increased to astronomical heights, so too did the expenditures of the host countries in staging the Games. As hosts for the 1964 Olympics, Japan was reported to have spent more than $56 million for sports facilities, $16.8 million for operating expenses, and $280 million on new roads (Miller & Russell, 1971:156). In Mexico in 1968, $153.2 million was spent on installation, organization, and administration of the Olympic Games (Miller & Russell, 1971:156). The estimated cost of the 1972 Munich Olympics started off at $150 million. By the time they ended, the most conservative estimate of total cost was $600 million. When calculated on a per-Olympic-minute basis, the Germans ended up having to pay almost $30,000 a minute for the privilege of hosting the two-week spectacle (McMurtry, 1976:53)).

However, it was the incidence of commercialization in both the 1968 Winter Games in Grenoble and the 1972 Winter Games in Sapporo, which brought the confrontation between amateurism and professionalism to a head. It was clear by the completion of the 1972 Winter

Games, that commercialization and professionalism had firmly established themselves as permanent features of the Olympic movement. There were two aspects of this commercialization of the Olympics; first, the money made 'around' the Games (i.e., commercial sponsors, television rights, advertising, facilities, and tourism), and second, the money paid directly to athletes for testing and promoting certain brands of sports equipment. At Grenoble, with the backing of the French governement the organizing committee took as one of its prime tasks the promotion of regional development, based on tourism and winter sports in the Alps. The French government, representing the huge interests tied up in the winter sports industry - including hotel trade, sports equipment manufacturers, ski instructors, ski lift firms, etc., - was aiming to capture a large part of the world ski tourist market. In explaining his intentions, the French Prime Minister Pompidou said that the Games provided an unique opportunity to develop facilities and give unprecedented publicity to the resorts. This factor, as much as the Games themselves, was what justified the exceptional financial effort.(Brohm, 1978:123).

The struggle between ski equipment manufacturers for domination of the winter sports market was the second commercial feature at Grenoble. The ski manufacturers hoped to use the staging of the Olympics as a springboard to a lion's share of the ski market. The manufacturers exploited the commercial and advertising possibilities opened up by Jean-Claude Killy's spectacular success in international downhill skiing. Killy was an ideal model for the selling of goods.

Another reflection of the sharp competition between the manufacturers was the scandal concerning the wearing of brand names by competitors. In return for buying exclusive rights to supply equipment to well known competitors, the ski manufacturers hoped to profit from the publicity given to the sport. Ski champions were progressively turned into sandwich-board men - the accredited representatives of brands of skis or socks - turning sports contests into confrontations between manufacturers fighting each other for domination of the market (Brohm, 1978:123-124). Nancy Greene, who won a skiing Gold Medal at Grenoble, pointed out that with this kind of money at stake, it was necessary to appeal to a gigantic audience to pay for it all. In her autobiography, she stated that "The result inevitably is that the Olympic Games descend to the level of spectacle and begin to resemble some kind of circus" (Hoch, 1976:44). During the 71st session of the International Olympic Committee, the president, Avery Brundage, declared that he was determined to ban such athletes who blatantly represented sports manufacturers from taking part. If this rule had been applied at Grenoble, 90 percent of the athletes would have been disqualified (Brohm, 1978:126).

The organization of the 1972 Sapporo Winter Olympics was another demonstration of the increasing contradiction between official Olympic ideology concerning amateurism and the reality of the struggle between the winter sports manufacturers. Despite numerous declarations of

intent on amateurism, it was generally accepted that an amateur member of the French ski team, for example, earned an average of £17,000 a year. This sort of 'shamateurism' showed that competing in the Olympics had become a profession (Brohm, 1978:127).

The original concept of the Olympic Games was irrevocably altered in the 1960's; they became largely commercial events. Economic consideration became predominant. The Olympic ideal of the 'amateur' became a residual ideal. The majority of top line competitors became professional sportsmen. It was in this environment that the Canadian Government began to re-consider its policies towards sport.

Implementing the Campaign Promise

It will be recalled that Trudeau had promised, during the election campaign of 1968, to investigate amateur sport in Canada. His promise had been made in the context of remarks about the contribution of culture to national unity, and he placed sport, as well, in this context:

> There are a certain number of symptoms which worry me - The fact that hockey is our national sport and yet in the world championship we have not been able, as amateurs, to perform as well as we know we can.
>
> (Broom & Baka, 1979:27)

He was also concerned that Canadian cities, particularly Vancouver, were having difficulty in obtaining National Hockey League franchises.

Trudeau won a majority in 1968, the first Prime Minister to do so in the four elections of the decade, and flush with enthusiasm his new government set about making reforms and implementing campaign promises. A Task Force to investigate amateur sport in Canada was created in August of 1968. Its members were: Nancy Greene, national ski hero; Harold Rea, a business man; and Dr. Paul Des Ruisseaux, a former professional marathon swimmer who had served on the National Advisory Council on Fitness and Amateur Sport.

The mandate given to the task force was quite general:

1. to report on prevailing concepts and definitions of both amateur and professional sport in Canada and the effect of professional sport on amateur sport;
2. to assess the role of the federal government in relation to non-governmental, national and international organizations and agencies in promoting and developing Canadian participation in sport; and
3. to explore ways in which the Government could improve further, the extent and quality of Canadian participation in both sport at home and abroad.

(Canada, 1969:Preface)

The concern about hockey and success in international sport has already been noted. But there were other factors which made a comprehensive review desirable. The federal Fitness and Amateur Sport Program had reached a plateau after seven years of operation. The need for facilities at the local level, and problems relating to the administration of amateur sports in Canada were increasingly obvious. The Fitness and Amateur Sport Directorate itself felt that the federal government should re-evaluate its role in amateur sport. (FASD Annual Report, 1968-69:2).

Despite its mandate, and despite the more general concerns which had led to its creation, the Task Force devoted more than half of its report to professional sport, particularly hockey. They reported that problems in hockey had serious international consequences:

> Officials of the Dept. of External Affairs have assured us that this deterioration in the overall image of Canada abroad, and especially in Europe, because of our recent failures in hockey is of much concern to them.
>
> (Canada, 1969:30)

The Task Force worked in haste. Its report was submitted to Parliament in May, 1969, and this short time frame meant that it could not perform or commission thorough original research in its areas of concern.

In its main focus, the Task Force fulfilled Trudeau's election promise to look into the control and effect of professional hockey on the lives of young Canadians. The report was extremely critical. It held up hockey as an example of how a professional sports organization could destroy the talent basis of an international sport. A second and related problem was the difficulty Vancouver was having obtaining an NHL franchise over its American rivals. The Task Force considered the Canadian Football League to be a good model of professional-amateur relationships. The fact that the CFL is a uniquely Canadian league and institution was lauded.

Among the major recommendations of the Task Force was that a "non-profit corporation to be known as Hockey Canada be established for the

purpose of managing and financing the national hockey teams of Canada". This recommendation was actually pre-empted by the announcement of the formation of Hockey Canada eight days before the Task Force Report was submitted to John Munro, then Minister of Health and Welfare.

In the remainder of its report, the Task Force looked at more general issues. It concluded that the prime orientation of members of the National Advisory Council on Fitness and Amateur Sport was towards physical fitness and recreation. Because of the broad scope of its concerns, the Council was not effective in other areas. The Task Force recommended that its name be changed to "The National Advisory Council on Fitness and Recreation". A new, non-profit organization, to be called "Sport Canada" would provide the focus for the administrative support, and growth of elite competitive sport.

The Task Force also suggested that the private and public sectors should work together in creating a sports structure extending from mass participation to national team athletes. There should be a high degree of cooperation among municipal, provincial and federal agencies in the public sector; among club, provincial, and national organizations in the private sector; and finally, between the public and private sectors at each level.

The Task Force was the first independent report or study of professional and public opinion of what was generally considered the weak links of the national amateur sport system, and proposals to resolve these weaknesses. It had used an information gathering format which was partially public in nature.

Although it contained overstatements and omissions, the Report can be excused in the light of its historical impact and forthrightness. What the Task Force did was to make legitimate federal involvement in amateur sport. There was no longer any reason to be embarrassed about promoting amateur sport. As a result, the focus of policy turned to special problems and structural weaknesses concerned with the development of amateur sport in Canada, and in particular with national and international athletics.

The government which, since the 1968-69 Task Force Report had dealt primarily with sport, saw the need for a second, complementary study to address the areas of fitness and recreation. The National Advisory Council, at its meeting in June 1969, found the Task Force Report on Sports to be only a fragmentary description of the Canadian situation. The Council therefore supported a request for a broader study of the situation as a whole. So it happened that six weeks after he had received the Report of the Task Force, Mr. Munro commissioned P.S. Ross and Partners, a Montreal firm of management consultants, to study the total system of physical recreation, fitness and amateur sport in Canada, and to recommend a set of national objectives and within those objectives a role for the federal government. Because of the focus of the Task Force Report, the P.S. Ross study was to focus more on fitness and recreation. Its objectives were twofold:

1. To describe and assess the total system and the population it serves in Canada today, to include as much information as could be assembled on organization, programs, facilities, population characteristics, attitudes, problems, gaps and needs.

2. To recommend a set of national objectives, and within those objectives, the role of the Federal government and, more specifically, programs and organization for the Directorate of Fitness and Amateur Sport.

The basic recommendations of the P.S. Ross report, which was submitted to the Minister in November, 1969, was for increased federal government involvement in recreation. It made only one recommendation on fitness, a general statement that every Canadian should develop a level of fitness sufficient to contribute positively to physical and mental health. Reference to amateur sport was expressed by the support of two points from the Task Force report: first, Canada should develop a level of performance in national and international competition that would contribute to national unity and international prestige; and second, the Directorate should take initiative in organizing Sport Canada. The rest of the Report, and national objectives which were defined, dealt with the importance of recreation for Canadians, and the need to provide adequate education, opportunities and services to meet this need.

Although the P.S. Ross Report was broad and descriptive, it failed to provide a good data base, and disappointment with it led the government to label the Report confidential. It has never been made public.

The National Advisory Council had established a steering committee to provide an analysis of the Report to the NAC at its December meeting. National Advisory Council member Richard du Wors, at the 22nd meeting of the Council in December, 1969, moved "that the P.S. Ross study be rejected by Council and that no further study be undertaken except by people of specific competence in the field of physical education and sports". Ensuing comments ranged from full support of the resolution to qualifications of it as arrogant and obstructive. The result of the discussion was that the amended resolution was tabled for consideration at a later date (NAC, Minutes of the 22nd Meeting, 17 and 18 Dec. 1969). Although the P.S. Ross Report overlapped the Report of the Task Force, it contained little support for the key recommendations of the Task Force. This caused some embarrassment to both the members of the National Advisory Council and the Fitness and Amateur Sport Directorate.

While most of the Task Force recommendations have been implemented, the basic P.S. Ross recommendation for increased federal government involvement in recreation has not. Recreation has for years been a touchy issue due to issues of federal-provincial jurisdiction, and it continued to be a controversial area throughout the 1970's.

The government's synthesis of these elements was presented to the House of Commons by John Munro in March 1980 as "A Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians". The Minister described the policy as the

culmination of the thinking of the government, the department, the Fitness and Amateur Sport Directorate, aided by the Task Force and P.S. Ross Reports, the Montmorency Conference on Leisure, and the recommendations of the National Advisory Council. The proposed policy included both mass participation and excellence. The introduction to the white paper stated:

> "Our policy is about people -- the greatest number of Canadians possible -- increasing their participation in sports and recreational activities, and improving the benefits they can enjoy from such participation ...
> If, along the way, it also serves to upgrade the calibre of Canadian participation in the world sports arena .. which we are completely confident it will -- then we will be able to really take pride in ourselves for having achieved something that very few other nations have been able to develop -- a successful, yet well balanced total national sports program.
> (Canada, 1970:2)

This suggested that the focus was primarily to be on mass participation. But the programs proposed in the document were focussed primarily on competitive, elite sport. Among the major suggested programs were: administrative support for national sports governing bodies; a selection criteria for priority 1 and 2 sports to receive financial support; Canadian national competitions on an annual basis (between the Canada Games); the creation of a new Sports Canada division within the Directorate; a communications agency to work on publicity and promotion; and grants-in-aid to promising athletes. Only a few of the specific recommendations were directed towards the fitness and recreation side.

The reasons for greater government efforts were, the proposal argued, concern for: national unity; the quality of Canadian life, regardless of income or social position; the cultural significance of sport; and the need to place the pursuit of international excellence in proper perspective. The philosophy of the proposed policy was centred on three values attributed to physical activity: 1) improved physical fitness; 2) improved mental health; and 3) improved involvement in a range of societal issues. It had a strong concern for individual welfare and quality of life. John Munro wanted to increase the amount and forms of assistance to sport to develop programs that would encourage mass participation. The concept of a mutually reinforcing pyramid was developed with a few elite athletes at the top and a broad base of participating people at the bottom (West, 1973:6.15-17).

The "Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians" established much of the rationale for federal government involvement in sport. It is the source of the federal government's commitment towards direct administrative assistance to sports governing bodies and agencies (the Administrative Centre in Ottawa); beginnings of in-house administrative re-organization (Sport Canada); increased subsidizations of travel grants for athletes and officials; and the formal creation of the Canada Games. Later policy statements included few innovations and in many instances only amplified the "Proposed Sports Policy's" ideas.

Like many government policy documents it tried to please all people and look in opposite directions at the same time. Elite and mass sport were not uniform parts of an integrated structure as the "Proposed Sports Policy" suggested. On this score, it had run contrary to the general emphasis of the Task Force Report. Elite sport, it proposed, should not stand alone on its own. Mr. Phillipe de Gaspe Beaubien, Chairman of the National Advisory Council agreed with this. Sport could not be left alone to proceed in isolation. Somehow it had to play a role in recreation. Through the proposed integration, competitive sport could reap the benefits of a wider base, increased participation, quality athletes, and greater international success (NAC Minutes of the 23rd Meeting, 20 March, 1970).

But there were also doubts. Des Ruisseaux, a member of the Task Force, put forth an opposing point of view. He recognized as distinct and separate the areas of fitness and recreation, and of international success in sport. Excellence in sport was seen as the business of a small group, totally devoted to success in competition. Fitness and recreation, on the other hand, was the business of municipal, provincial, and federal agencies, which already had structure and competence, to act successfully in the area. Des Ruisseaux said that his group (the Task Force) was of the belief that any hope to get professional sport, amateur sport, and recreational groups to work together towards participation of the masses for recreational purposes was futile indeed. (NAC Minutes of the 23rd Meeting, 20 March, 1970).

Many others strongly supported increased emphasis on elite athletes. Lou Lefaive, Director of Sport Canada believed that a change in attitude was brought about by the Task Force:

> The Task Force identified very clearly that this kind of approach was not nearly as repugnant to sport people as some people on the Advisory Council and within the Directorate would have you believe when they kept saying that sport wouldn't let you do it. The Task Force helped to allay that fear -- not only were they (the recommendations) acceptable to sport people, the sport people wanted it -- it was an idea whose time had come. The Task Force was an expression of what was happening... it was an evolution of knowledge and thinking.. the Task Force gave some direction and thinking and a time frame when things would happen which resulted in the Proposed Sport Policy .
>
> (Lefaive, 1977, Cited by Hallett, 1981:622).

Regardless of what happened on the fitness and mass participation side the "Proposed Sport Policy" clearly signalled the government's intention to put more effort and resources into the improvement of Canadian performance in international competition, and the development of elite athletes. Trudeau's musings on the campaign trail in 1968 were now bearing fruit in a substantial change in government policy that was to have great impact on sport in Canada.

Sport Transformation and Government Sport Policy: The Connection

We have noted the transformation of sport under the pressures of mass media and mass society. As Richard Espy (1979:ix) has noted for the Olympics:

> The commercial aspect of the games cannot be ignored. In 1896 this aspect was absent, at least in terms of today's standards, but since World War II the role of commerce in the Olympic Games has mirrored the role of commerce in international relations. The rise of multi-national corporations to a position of economic and political strength is vividly exhibited in the modern Games in the development of television rights, commercial products and advertising, corporate contributions to national and organizing committees and financial rewards for hosting the Games.

These processes of professionalization and commercialization continued in different forms in the 1976 Summer Games in Montreal and appear to be reaching a peak in the preparation of the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

At the same time that sport was becoming increasingly commercialized and professionalized, it also became more rationalized. The dominant forms of sport became defined in 'linear terms' - standards of achievement, records, international results. "This means that 'progress' is equated with meeting and then surpassing objectively measured standards through scientific innovations, better technique and greater skill efficiency..." Cantelon, 1980:17-18). The increased objectivity in measuring and defining the outcomes of sport

meant that other more traditional values of sport, particularly those related to the personal subjective outcomes for the participant, received less attention and thus less credence. Progress in sport became defined as continued improvements in objectively measured performance.

The Canadian Government's sport policies accepted this framework. Perhaps the most blatant example of the rationalization of sport in Canada occurred at the 1978 Commonwealth Games held in Edmonton when the Canadian federal minister with responsibilities for Sport, Iona Campagnolo, publicly set medal quotas for Canadian athletes. After these quotas had been met, the minister marched with the athletes in the closing ceremonies. Australian and British journalists responded to these events by referring to Canada as the 'East Germany' of Commonwealth sport. Canadian sports officials replied to these accusations by saying that Canada was not going to apologize for a commitment to excellence (Macintosh et al, 1982).

More recently, Tom Bedecki (1983), raised concerns regarding the Olympic Games. They have come to be regarded as the most significant "barometers of success" in the international sports world. Participating countries, including Canada, have been forced to emphasize their increasing investments in high performance sport at the expense of sport-for-all and non-Olympic sports. The introduction of even more bureaucracy, commercialism, and unbalanced support for various types and levels of sport, had made the rationalization of sport in Canada more overt than ever before. Though the transformation of sport has not been totally negative in its outcomes

(i.e., increased publicity for sport generally; possible links to the current fitness boom, etc.) some significant questions have been raised with regard to the motives and future impact of this rationalization.

For example, we have seen that the government in its policy revisions of 1968-70 paid lip service to mass participation sport, and linked them with high performance elite competitions. But the outcome was emphasis on the second goal, at the expense of the first. Can these two goals really be linked? Or are they distinct? Also, in whose interest is emphasis on high performance sport? "Does the existence of a sports organization which promotes national teams, monetary assistance for athletes, full-time professional coaches, all of which are funded out of public tax dollars, express the wishes of the majority of citizens or is it the policy of a small sports elite?" (Cantelon, 1980:31). And, "Is there any evidence to suggest that participation increases as a result of international sports success, as is clearly stated by USSR and Canadian sport policies?" (Ibid.)

The attitude that the success of the program should be measured by the success of the athletes, and that the goal was highly visible achievement, found strong support in the theories of policy-making adopted by the Trudeau Government. Rationalization of government activities, so that each program formed a logical part of a coherent whole directed towards national goals was central to the Trudeau reforms. So also was the measurement of a program's success in terms

of how well, and at what cost, it achieved its stated goals. Use of this sort of analytical framework for planning and evaluating sports programs created a sympathetic environment for emphasizing elite achievements as a means of achieving national prestige, and made it inevitable that sport, conceived in these terms, would be instrumentalized, and would become a means for achieving ends beyond the sport itself.

There is no convincing evidence one way or the other on the argument that this emphasis on elite achievement has harmed or encouraged mass participation and fitness. It is clear, however, that the meaning of "sport" to the bulk of Canadians, is watching high performance athletes, amateur and professional, on television. The situation, and its emotional context, are not unlike those of modern mass politics in which active participation is limited to a few "professionals". For the masses of citizens, participation is vicarious, and the citizen is a sedentary spectator of both sport and politics. Both also arouse strong emotions. Irvine Schiffer in his provocative analysis of charisma in mass society frequently points out the similarity between the two:

> ... it is mandatory that the stand of the charismatic leader not be in opposition to a mere abstraction or thing, but against another human adversary (even if such an adversary has to be invented). To illustrate, can you conjure up a boxer englamoured by people for his sheer physical performance at shadow boxing? Who has more appeal.. the track athlete who races against time or the one who defeats a competitor at the tape?

Both sports and political leaders are charismatic:

> A charismatic leader then may be chosen to extricate us from the potentially paralytic clutches of a monstrous and uncanny trigger agent... I suggest too that Hockey Team Canada did more than simply rescue the pride of the Canadian people. It rescued them from the Russian 'Pavlovian' school of hockey which, by its uncanny robotism, made Canadians feel out of control. For many people, their charismatic political choice is a conscious exercise in the preservation of their free will and self-determination and a rejection of the forces of coercion and tyranny... (Ibid., p.82)

Charles Taylor has taken a less sanguinary view of this process. He argues that:

> ...there are two different but often interwoven demands in modern society which can both be expressed in the word "participation". The first of these is the pressure.... for a greater say in decisions; the second is the aspiration to participate as recipient and donor in some larger life. This latter seems of more general import, but because of our more tenuous contact with the sacred in its traditional mediations, because of the fragmentation of partial societies, this second demand comes too to focus to a great degree on the political process....
>
> (Taylor, 1970:109-110)

Though Taylor is speaking only of politics, his argument that the end result of the emphasis on image and charisma in modern mass politics is an illusion, is appropriate to sport as well, for there, as in politics, the sense of well-being and self-esteem in the masses from achievements of athletes in international competition is illusory:

> ... this is pure magic, black or white, depending on one's point of view. It is a kind of imitation, in gesture only, of the genuine achievement of participation in something significant.... And just as what one receives is one's own dream, so one's participation is without real substance. This must be so, for it could only have substance if people's goals really weighed in the outcome, and this presupposes the kind of hard political dialogue in which dream projection can have no place.
>
> (Ibid., p.113)

In mass spectator sports, there is no hard dialogue whatsoever, because the only goals for the masses are images and illusions. Taylor would not agree with Schiffer that the success of Team Canada performed a useful function in rescuing Canadians from tyranny.

These lines of analysis will not be pursued further here. The point to be made is that the style of politics of the early Trudeau Government, with its emphasis on charismatic leadership, Trudeau the 'single combat champion' (in Richard Gwyn's phrase) fighting the evils that beset the country, and on the interaction between leader and the masses through television, bears a close resemblance to the structure, interaction, and emotions of instrumentalized elite international athletic competition. More of the causes of changes in sports policy might be in this similarity than has yet been recognized.

It can be speculated as to why a comparable government sports policy did not emerge in the United States. Here are some possibilities: first, the United States supremacy in so-called national sports --- baseball, football, and basketball --- was not threatened as was Canada's hockey supremacy; second, unlike Canada, the United States already had in place a well-organized, strong and successful delivery system for elite amateur athletes in the college programs; third, the United States Government has always been less interventionist than the Canadian, and has played a smaller role in society and nation building, and fourth, the United States has a powerful system of national myths -- the frontier, Horatio Alger, free enterprise, manifest destiny --- which had no counterpart in Canada.

This made the need for success in elite sports less obvious. Nevertheless, in spite of these differences, it must be emphasized that sport became equally commodified and instrumental in the United States; it was simply that the government had a smaller role in the transformation.

Finally, we should ask whether, in a broad sense, the change has been harmful. The greatest dangers facing the modern world are uncontrolled aggression, particularly in international affairs. Nuclear war and the destruction of civilization is not only possible but likely. Elite international sports can be a focus of controlled, acceptable aggression, a healthy, cathartic, acting out of hostility and fear, as Schiffer suggests. Insofar as they perform this function, the Olympic games and other competitions are, regardless of rationalization and commodification, good and useful. On the other hand, international sport competitions can also raise jingoistic sentiments to a point where violence and riot occur, with resultant increased hostility and suspicion among nations. The challenge is not to eliminate the use of sport as an instrument for other ends so much as to change the attitudes towards nationalism and participation, in both sport and politics, that makes such instrumentalization desirable.

A more serious threat of the prevalent form of professional and elite amateur sport is its impact on mass participatory sports programs. The instrumentalized values of the dominant form of sport threaten to permeate youth sport programs to the extent that

instrinsic outcomes of participation will no longer hold any attraction or value. For the young person who cannot perform at a level where the extrinsic rewards are forthcoming, - i.e., prizes, records, all-star recognition, etc, - the alternative is dropping out of competitive sports programs. We need to devise ways in which the residual intrinsic values of sport, the joy of participation, and the ecstasy of movement - are reinforced and maintained in modern society.

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